

Mass Meeting of the Tobacco Growers of Pittsylvania County, Va.

Editors Progressive Farmer:

The Pittsylvania County meeting of the "Interstate Tobacco Growers' Association" was held in Danville, Va., on February 9, 1904, in the city court-house, and between three and four hundred of the county's best tobacco growers were there. It could be plainly seen that determination was written on their faces and that they were going to push their organization to a successful end.

After prayer by the Rev. Dr. Hall, Hon. W. T. Wilson, of Ringold, was elected temporary chairman. A cordial address of welcome was then delivered by Mayor Wooding, who said among other things, "that the prosperity of the tobacco grower was their prosperity, and that the business men of Danville were in heartfelt sympathy with the tobacco growers' organization." Chairman Wilson made a happy response.

Hon. H. C. Allen, of Spring Garden, Va., was made permanent president of the county organization, Mr. E. T. Moorefield secretary and treasurer, and Mr. J. P. McCormick county organizer.

President S. C. Adams, of the "Interstate Association" being present, was called upon for an address. Briefly outlining the history of the organization, he made a splendid, common-sense, matter-of-fact speech. He urged the tobacco growers to cut their crop off at least 25 per cent and put the expenses of the 25 per cent in food products. He took issue with Col. J. S. Cunningham about advocating a full crop. He said that Col. Cunningham, at the meeting in Danville, November 17, 1903, advocated a reduction of 50 per cent, and now he says, "after having studied the situation, he advises the growing of a full crop." He wants to know of the Colonel what has brought about such a radical change. He then went on to show how the business of this day was carried on by organization, and that instead of tobacco going up as other products advanced, it generally went the other way; that eight-tenths of all the goods that the farmer purchases, the price is fixed by a combine and that the tobacco he sells, the price is also fixed by a combine, and asked could the tobacco grower expect better conditions as long as the other fellow held both ends of the rope? He insisted that the price of tobacco should be governed by the cost of production and a fair profit added to it; and that lots of people in this country were beginning to think that the farmer wasn't entitled to much. He urged us all to stand shoulder to shoulder so that we could demand and get a fair return for our labor.

The following resolutions were adopted unanimously:

(1) In view of the cry of over-production, we urge the tobacco growers to reduce this crop 25 per cent.

(2) Whereas, the importation of Turkish and Egyptian tobacco has grown to enormous proportions, and

the sales of these tobaccos are coming in active competition with the product of Virginia and the Carolinas; and, whereas, the tobacco growers of these States have received very low prices for this product, and being desirous of bettering their condition, we request our representatives in Congress to investigate this question as to importation, and to take such steps as will protect our interests.

B.

COTTON PICKING MACHINE.

The Invention of an Illinois Man Described in Detail.

To the Editor of the Charlotte Chronicle:

I have seen editorial reference in your paper to the need of a cotton-picking machine and the vast sums it would save the cotton planters. I send you herewith photographs and description of a cotton-picking machine invented by Mr. N. Bowditch, of Aurora, Ill. The illustrations give a good general idea of the machine.

How it picks the cotton is thus explained: The machine consists of two large hollow wheels, five feet in diameter, and made of Bessemer steel, or other metal; within the rim of these wheels are two cams inclined at an angle, and between these cams are twenty-four picker bars, which the revolution of the two wheels causes to move from the outer edge of the rim of the wheel to the face or web of the wheel, about ten inches. Attached to these picker bars are a series of flexible, spiral pickers, composed of two twisted bands of steel with hair cloth interposed between the edges being frayed out, thus forming the picking points. These spiral pickers are projected through rows of holes radially placed in the sides of the wheels, the space between the two wheels being about twenty inches. The machine is driven straddling the rows of cotton plants. The spiral pickers are pressed into the plants as they pass between the wheels, and the pickers rotating entangle the open, fibrous cotton, and winding it up on the pickers, it is pulled out of the boll, and as the wheel continues to turn, it is brought to the top of the wheels, where the pickers are entirely withdrawn into the wheel. There being nothing to support the cotton thus cleaned off the pickers, gravity makes it drop into a hopper where it is conveyed by an endless belt into an elevator, at the top of which is a sack which receives the gathered cotton.

From six to ten acres can be covered by this machine in a day—the quantity of cotton picked depending entirely upon the amount of ripe cotton on the plants, as it requires no more time or power to go over rows, the individual plants of which containing thirty or more open ripe bolls of cotton, than over plants with only ten ripe bolls. The machine is a very great labor-saving device, and is destined to work a rapid and complete revolution in a field which has heretofore successfully resisted the combined assaults of capital, energy, mechanical ingenuity and inventive skill.

Aurora, Ill., Jan. 15, 1904.

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